

and shift borders. Therefore, we have a strong interest in supporting Yugoslavia's newly elected leaders as they work to build a truly democratic society. Our disagreement was with the Milosevic regime, not the people of Serbia who have suffered under the regime's brutal policies.

The removal of these sanctions is a first step to ending Serbia's isolation. It is within the scope of the sanctions-lifting measure announced Monday by the European Union (EU) ministers in Luxembourg, and we will move forward in coordination with the EU. We will also ensure that such measures do not allow those supporters of Milosevic to continue the systematic theft of resources that have marked the last 13 years. In that vein, we will continue to enforce a ban on travel to the United States by top members of the Milosevic regime and keep in place measures that help the new government deter a looting of the national patrimony during the current period of transition in Yugoslavia. We will also review our restrictions on Serbia's participation in international financial institutions as Serbia makes its democratic transition and meets its international obligations.

There is still much work ahead for the Yugoslav people and their new government: restoring confidence in the rule of law, rebuilding an honest economy, accounting for the past while building a better future. Thankfully, that work can now begin—without the burden of isolation—and with the friendship of the American people.

Statement on Signing the Inter-American Convention for the Protection and Conservation of Sea Turtles

October 12, 2000

I am pleased today to sign the instrument of ratification for the Inter-American Convention for the Protection and Conservation of Sea Turtles. This treaty is the first international agreement dedicated solely to raising standards for the protection of sea turtles.

All six species of sea turtle found in the Western Hemisphere are threatened or en-

dangered, some critically so. The extensive migration patterns of these majestic creatures span thousands of miles in both the Atlantic and Pacific oceans. Consequently, effective conservation measures depend on close international cooperation. This treaty fosters that cooperation and serves as a model for others focused on conserving the world's most endangered species.

This Convention also demonstrates that countries can work together to protect marine life, and that our trade and environment policies can be mutually supportive. I commend the Senate for giving its advice and consent to ratification of this important agreement.

Statement on Hate Crimes Legislation

October 12, 2000

Today marks 2 years since young Matthew Shepard was beaten unconscious, tied to a fence, and left to die. At the time of Matthew's death, I expressed my sympathy for the family and my outrage about the heinous nature of the crime. Since then, Matthew's death has been a call to action to many across the country committed to doing more to prevent and prosecute hate crimes. Many have worked tirelessly, along with my administration, to pass meaningful hate crimes legislation this year. Their efforts led to two strong bipartisan votes—one in the House and one in the Senate—in favor of hate crimes legislation. Unfortunately, just last week, the Republican leadership—denying the will of a bipartisan majority in both the House and the Senate—stripped hate crimes legislation from the Department of Defense Authorization bill. This action is wrong, and the will of the majority should be respected. We must not let the fear of people different from ourselves prevent this legislation from passing. Working with the bipartisan coalition that supports hate crimes legislation, I will continue to fight to make sure this important work gets done.

**Statement on Senate Action on
Departments of Veterans Affairs and
Housing and Urban Development,
and Independent Agencies
Appropriations Legislation**

October 12, 2000

I am pleased that the Senate has passed a VA/HUD bill that will open the doors of opportunity in America for those who need it most, build on our agenda for national energy security, and strengthen our commitment to the environment. With this legislation—which includes key provisions negotiated by my budget team—we take an important step toward addressing critical national priorities and opening the doors of opportunity for many more Americans.

This legislation builds upon my opportunity agenda with increased funding for economic development through empowerment zones and enterprise communities and community development financial institutions, all part of my new markets initiative, and with 79,000 new housing vouchers for low income families. This agreement also increases support for the Federal Emergency Management Agency's emergency food and shelter programs which work with States and communities to help the homeless and hungry. We are also strengthening our commitment to national service with additional support for the Corporation for National and Community Service, the first increase since the inception of this critical volunteer agency in 1993.

With this legislation, we support the significant expansion of cutting-edge basic scientific research at the National Science Foundation. This includes research in nanotechnology—the manipulation of matter at the molecular and atomic level—which holds the promise of scientific breakthroughs in a wide range of fields. It also advances scientific research through support for space exploration at NASA. At especially at this time of elevated fuel prices, I am also pleased that this bill provides resources for technologies to increase fuel efficiency, an essential part of our long-term strategy to reduce dependence on oil.

This agreement also contains increased funding for enforcement of the Nation's en-

vironmental laws and for the cleanup of polluted waterways. The agreement we reached drops or fixes several objectionable riders that threatened to harm our environment. Yet, while we were able to ameliorate the impact of the remaining riders, we were not able to rid this bill entirely of objectionable provisions, in particular the rider relating to ozone.

This agreement also provides the additional \$1.5 billion I requested for the Department of Veterans Affairs, the largest increase ever requested by any administration. This funding will support efforts to improve veterans' medical care and the delivery of key services, including disability benefits.

This agreement is clear proof of the progress we can achieve when we work together to address the Nation's priorities.

**Proclamation 7362—Death of
American Servicemembers Aboard
the United States Ship COLE**

October 12, 2000

*By the President of the United States
of America*

A Proclamation

As a mark of respect for those who died on the United States Ship COLE, I hereby order, by the authority vested in me as President of the United States by the Constitution and the laws of the United States of America, that the flag of the United States shall be flown at half-staff upon all public buildings and grounds, at all military posts and naval stations, and on all naval vessels of the Federal Government in the District of Columbia and throughout the United States and its Territories and possessions until sunset, Monday, October 16, 2000. I also direct that the flag shall be flown at half-staff for the same length of time at all United States embassies, legations, consular offices, and other facilities abroad, including all military facilities and naval vessels and stations.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this twelfth day of October, in the year of our Lord two thousand, and of the